CHAPTER II

THE NATURE OF MORAL FREEDOM

"Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed;

And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." John VIII:31, 32.

"But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only deceiving your own selves.

"For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass:

"For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was.

"*But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed.*" James I: 22-25.

"So speak ye, and so do, as they that shall be judged by *the law of liberty.*" James II: 12.

"Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage." Galatians V: 1.

Commentary

Truth represents the permanent and freedom the dynamic elements in the moral and religious life. They are interdependent. Moral freedom is not a gift of nature, nor can it be conferred upon an individual by authority of the state. It is rather a goal to be attained by each individual by long continued moral practice. This moral practice requires that one shall know the truth, as it pertains to human relations and conduct, and that this truth shall be applied in daily life. The term is, therefore, relative, and the condition called moral freedom is only progressively realized.

Opposed to moral freedom is the condition of being a slave to vice, a typical example of which is the habitual drunkard or the "dope fiend." There are, however, many other examples that are less readily recognized. Habitual use of any stimulant, for instance, tends to enslave the user to that particular habit. A person may likewise become a slave to his passions: fits of anger, morbid fears, or sexual indulgence. The miser becomes a slave to a perverted sense of ownership. In both social affairs and politics men and women may become slaves to selfish ambitions. All of these forms of slavery are the outcome of failure to grasp moral ideals and to put them into practice.

The term freedom, unqualified, like the terms liberty and law, has a variety of meanings and, like liberty, is often confused with license. It is on this account that some people talk of prohibition laws as interfering with their freedom, liberty, or other assumed inalienable right. These terms are here confused with license. No one can properly claim the right to indulge his appetites or passions if such indulgence is opposed to the highest good of humanity; nor can any such license ever be regarded as an inalienable right. Whatever inalienable rights any one has may be summarized under the right to live a moral life. With this right goes the corresponding duty of helping others, to the fullest extent of one's abilities and opportunities, to exercise this same inalienable right.

Humanity is not a mere conglomeration of individuals, nor is its life manifest chiefly in the present. It is rather, an organic whole that lives through the centuries, and through each successive generation develops new mental, social, and spiritual powers. These make possible to each individual a higher degree of moral freedom than could otherwise be attained.

Unlike acquisition of the natural resources of the earth, where possession by one individual may mean privation of others, individual attainment of moral freedom by one helps others to similar attainment. There can be no monopoly of spiritual goods and no impoverishment of some individuals because of the rich possessions of others. On the contrary, spiritual enrichment of some individual tends to increase the spiritual wealth of others.

Moral freedom may be regarded as a by-product of spiritual attainment.

PROBLEMS

1. (a) In what various senses is the term, freedom, used?

(b) What are the distinguishing characteristics of moral freedom?

2. What does James mean by the "perfect law of liberty?"

3. What does Paul mean by "the yoke of bondage?"

CHAPTER III

THE FUNCTION OF EVIL*

"And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him:

"For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.

"If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not?

"But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons.

"Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live?

"For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness.

"Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby." Hebrews XII: 5-11.

It is said of Jesus:

"Though he were a Son, *yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered;*

"And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him;" Hebrews V: 8, 9.

"As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent." Revelation III: 19.

"Woe unto the world because of offences! for it must needs be that offences come; but woe to that man by whom the offence cometh!" Matthew XVIII: 7.[1]

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*See also Emerson's essay on Compensation.

Commentary

To thoughtful minds the function of evil in the world has always been a deep mystery. Yet physical evils, such as earthquakes, floods, and drought, have long been recognized as having, under some circumstances, a disciplinary value. Thus when the purpose of human existence is recognized as development of strength of character, or attainment of spiritual power, it is not difficult to see how the calamaties of nature sometimes contribute toward realization of this end. The Old Testament is replete with instances of the use of the evils of nature as disciplinary measures to bring the nation, Israel, back to the moral and religious standards of the Mosaic code.

Any close observer may note how this often works in case of individuals and families. Many parents have been brought to a keener appreciation of spiritual values and to greater determination to realize these values because of the death of their child. Individuals have been morally or spiritually purified by very severe illness or loss of fortune. It does not follow that people should desire to lose children, health, or fortune for the sake of the consequent uplift. These moral values, in many instances, come through struggle to avoid or overcome natural evils. This is notably true of all forms of sickness. Who would go about seeking contact with virulent disease germs just for the moral thrill of severe illness? Evibe that offences come; but woe to that man by whom the offence cometh!" Matthew XVIII: 7.[1]

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[1] See also Luke XVII: 1, 2.

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[1] See also Luke XVII: 1, 2.

In case of moral evil the problem is more difficult to solve. Various solutions have been offered in different types of theology. One type holds that there is a real dualism of good and evil, light and darkness, in the world, and that these two powers are carrying on a perpetual warfare. Opposed to this is the theology that makes a Power for Righteousness omnipotent, but with temporary tolerance of moral evil. In any case moral evil has a very significant place in human experience.

Just as a person or a people may develop strength of character by struggle against physical evils, so may this strength be developed by struggle against moral evil. The great characters of history seem to have developed more by this means than by conflict with physical evils. Many of the great national movements for the better have also come about by revolution against moral or social wrongs.

These historical facts seem quite understandable in so far as struggle for the right is concerned and the moral benefits that come from it; but what of those who struggle in opposition to the right? Is there not necessarily some moral loss involved? In this respect moral evil seems to differ from physical evil. "It must needs be that offences come; but woe to that man by whom the offences cometh." This saying of Jesus is not further explained in the New Testament. It was and still is one of the deepest mysteries of the moral life.

It is generally admitted, however, that persons are not, as a rule, compelled by any power outside themselves to play the role of evil doers. The social order itself may be a contributing cause in many instances; but it must be recognized that in the same social order some individuals grow morally strong under adversity while others become moral degenerates.

PROBLEMS

1. Explain how chastening, under some circumstances, may be evidence of love joined with wisdom.

2. Recall, if you can, examples in your own experience of the morally beneficial results of chastening for wrongdoing.

3. (a) Under what conditions may physical or natural evils be favorable to the moral improvement of those who suffer from these evils?

(b) Why then should a person seek to forestall such evils?

Chapter IV

HUMAN SOLIDARITY AND KINSHIP IN A COMMON CAUSE

"In the mean while his disciples prayed him, saying, Master, eat.

"But he said unto them, I have meat to eat that ye know not of.

"Therefore said the disciples one to another, Hath any man brought him ought to eat?

"Jesus saith unto them, My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work.

"Say not ye, There are yet four months, and then cometh the harvest? behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest.

"And he that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life eternal: *that both he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together.*

"And herein is that saying true, *One soweth, and another reapeth.*

"I sent you to reap that whereon ye bestowed no labour: *other men laboured, and ye are entered into their labours.* John IV: 31-38.

"Then Paul stood in the midst of Mars' hill, and said, Ye men of Athens, I perceive that in all things ye are too superstitious.

"For as I passed by and beheld your devotions, I found an altar with this inscription, *TO THE UNKNOWN GOD,* Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you.

"God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands.

"Neither is worshipped with men's hands, as though he needed anything, seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things;

And *hath made of one blood all nations of men* for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation;

"That they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us:

"For in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said, For *we are also his offspring.*

"Forasmuch then as *we are the offspring of God,* we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man's device." The Acts XVII: 22-29.

After admonishing the Colossians to forsake all manner of evil doing, "seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds;" Paul writes, "And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him:

"*Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free;* but Christ is all, and in all." Colossians III:10, 11.

"For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office:

"So we, being many, are one body in Christ, *and every one members one of another.*" Romans XII: 4, 5.[1]

"I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called.

"With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love;

"Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

There is one body and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling.

"One Lord, one faith, one baptism,

"One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all." Ephesians IV: 1-6.

"While he yet talked to the people, behold, his mother and his brethren stood without, desiring to speak with him.

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[1] Also verses 6-8.

"Then one said to him, Behold, thy mother and thy brethren stand without, desiring to speak with thee.

"But he answered and said unto him that told him, Who is my mother? and who are my brethren?

"And he stretched forth his hand toward his disciples, and said, Behold my mother and my brethren!

"For *whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother.*" Matthew XII: 46-50.

"Rebuke not an elder, but entreat him as a father; and the younger men as brethren;

"The elder women as mothers; the younger as sisters, with all purity." I Timothy V: 1, 2.

"But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man.

"For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.

"*For both he that sanctifieth and they that are sanctified are all one*: *for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren,*

"Saying, *I will declare thy name unto my brethren,* in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee.

"And again, I will put my trust in him. And again, *Behold I and the children which God hath given me.*" Hebrews II: 9-13.

"Love the brotherhood." I Peter II: 17.

"Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you." John XV: 14.

"And behold a certain lawyer stood up, and tempted him, saying, Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?

"He said unto him, What is written in the law? how readest thou?

"And he answering said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind: and thy neighbor as thy self.

"And he said unto him, Thou hast answered right: this do, and thou shalt live.

"But he, willing to justify himself, said unto Jesus, And who is my neighbor?

"And Jesus answering said, A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, which stripped him of his raiment, and wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead.

"And by chance there came down a certain priest that way; and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side.

"And likewise a Levite, when he was at the place, came and looked on him, and passed by on the other side.

"But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was; and when he saw him, he had compassion on him,

"And went to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him.

"And on the morrow when he departed, he took out two pence, and gave them to the host, and said unto him, Take care of him; and whatsoever thou spendest more, when I come again, I will repay thee.

"Which now of these three, thinkest thou, was neighbor unto him that fell among the thieves?

"And he said, He that shewed mercy on him. Then said Jesus unto him, Go, and do thou likewise." Luke X: 25-37.

Commentary

Whatever scientific theories may come to prevail as to the single or multiple origin of the human species, it will generally be agreed that as civilization develops the interrelations of men and nations develop and bind them together in one great society or brotherhood. This is the ideal toward which we are striving; its progress, unfortunately, is sometimes retarded by strife concerning variant theories as to human origins. The New Testament point of view that "God hath made of one blood all nations for to dwell upon the face of the earth" and that he provides for all a way of salvation is one with which, from the standpoint of ethics, at least, we have little cause to disagree.

The soundest and most far reaching basis of ethics as an empirical study is found in the facts of human solidarity, which includes the common participation of civilized and enlightened men in the spiritual goods of civilization, and, to a large extent, in the use of material goods also. These constitute man's social inheritance as distinguished from his biological inheritance. This social inheritance is the joint product of mankind through many centuries of productive activity. It comes into existence at first by slow but ever increasingly rapid growth. Common participation in its uses makes civilized and cultured life possible; without it there would be no civilization and development of personality would be impossible; such is the dependence of each one of us upon our fellow men. There follows, logically and ethically, a corresponding obligation of gratitude toward and service to fellow men. This is a religion of humanity; it is included as part of the religion of the New Testament in the second great commandment and in the interpretation by Jesus and his followers of the significance of this commandment.

This notion of human solidarity is a very old one. It appears in Plato's theory of the state under the figure of a social organism, analogous to the bodily organism. This figure is applied by Paul to the church. The thought, the terms, and the illustrative figures of speech have many times since recurred in the literature of religion, philosophy, and the social studies. It received a new impetus with a group of French scholars and statesmen at the beginning of this century, and has now become a common mode of thought with students of sociology and ethics. Its validity is practically assured from the fact that it becomes more evident and more important with every advance of civilization. This has reference to the facts of human solidarity and the obligations that follow from these facts.

To meet the needs of men of different tastes and ambitions many diverse groups are organized, each group, however, having a common body of knowledge, interest, and purpose. As these groups become cooperatively active, a higher degree of solidarity is manifest. It often takes the form of kinship in a common cause and is outwardly expressed in creeds, union rules, business and professional codes; in the habit of calling fellow members "brother" or by given name, as in the family.

There is sometimes danger, as well as good, in these organizations. There is always the danger of class or group interests coming to overshadow the common welfare; there is also danger of intolerance in inter group relationships and, therefore, the possibility of civil strife in place of peace and united effort. These are dangers to be avoided, not objections to organization for more effective action toward socially valuable ends. Such organizations are now often formed for the sole purpose of promoting a cause having to do with the public welfare with no thought of personal gain to the members of the organization. This is a very high type of solidarity and kinship in a common cause.

PROBLEMS

1. (a) Give concrete illustrations of how each person of the present generation reaps the benefits of the labors of his predecessors.

(b) Show how each is benefited by the labors of his contemporaries.

2. (a) How may the idea of the fatherhood of God be related to the first great commandment?

(b) Is there any natural or logical relationship between the idea of the kinship of all men and the second great commandment?

3. Explain as fully as you can all of the ethical implications in the story of the Good Samaritan.

4. Name some common causes both in religious and secular history that have promoted kinship between individuals, groups, and peoples.

PART II

The Moral Standards of the New Testament

CHAPTER V

GENERAL AND TYPICAL STANDARDS

"Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbor, and hate thine enemy.

"But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you;

"That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.

"For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same?

"And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? do not even the publicans so?

"*Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.*" Matthew V: 43-48.

Paul exhorts the Ephesians to a life of righteousness and true holiness, then follows:

"*Be ye therefore followers of God,* as dear children;

"And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling savour." Ephesians V: 1, 2.

The last part of Chapter XI of the Epistle to the Romans is in praise of God, having special reference to his wisdom, knowledge, and creative power. Then follows:

"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that *ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God,* which is your reasonable service.

"And be not conformed to this world; but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that *ye may prove what is that good, acceptable, and perfect, will of God.*" Romans XII: 1, 2.

Chapter XIII of the Second Epistle to the Corinthians is an exhortation to uprightness of life and a prayer to God that they do no evil; then follows:

"Finally, brethren, farewell. *Be perfect,* be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love, and peace shall be with you." II Corinthians XIII: 11.

In Chapter X of the Epistle to the Hebrews, the author discusses the unsatisfactoriness of burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin, then follows: "Lo, *I come to do thy will, O God.*" Hebrews X: 9. The pronoun *I* here evidently stands for Jesus.

Chapter XIII exhorts the Hebrews to practice the moral and religious life in agreement with the gospel of Jesus Christ, then, by way of conclusion the author says: "Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant,

"*Make you perfect in every good work to do his will,* working in you that which is well-pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen." Hebrews XIII: 20, 21.

Chapter I of the First Epistle of Peter begins with an exposition of the power and the dignity of the gospel of Jesus Christ, then follows:

"Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ;

"As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance:

"But as *he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy* in all manner of conversation;

"Because it is written, *Be ye holy; for I am holy.*" I Peter I: 13-16.

Chapter I of the First Epistle General of John opens with a testimony of the divinity of Jesus Christ, then follows:

"This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.

"If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth:

"But if *we walk in the light; as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another,* and the blood of Jesus Christ his son cleanseth us from all sin." I John I: 5-7.

"We know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not; but he that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not." I John V: 18.

"My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations;

"Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience.

"But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be *perfect and entire, wanting nothing.*" James I: 2-4.

"Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, *To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world.*" James I: 27.

"Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

"Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted.

"Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth.

"Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.

"Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy.

"Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.

"Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God.

"Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

"Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake.

"Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you." Matthew V: 3-12.[1]

"No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.

"Therefore I say unto you, take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?

"Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they?

"Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature?

"And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin:

"And yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.

"Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?

"Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed?

"(For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things.

"But *seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness;* and all these things shall be added unto you." Matthew VI: 24-33.[2]

Since the New Testament sets up the *perfection of God as an ideal* toward which men should strive, the following passages are reproduced because of the light they throw upon this ideal.[3]

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[1] See also Luke VI: 36.

[2] See also Luke XII: 31.

[3] Citations from the Old Testament are here included because Jesus and his apostles often quoted the law and the prophets as authority in the fundamentals of religion. The New Testament conception of God was derived largely from the Old Testament.

"Give ear, O ye heavens, and I will speak; and hear O earth, the words of my mouth.

"My doctrine shall drop as the rain, my speech shall distill as the dew, as the small rain upon the tender herb, and as the showers upon the grass:

"Because I will publish the name of the Lord: ascribe ye greatness unto our God.

"*He is the Rock, his work is perfect: for all his ways are judgment:*[4] *a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right* is he." Deuteronomy XXXII: 1-4.

"What man is like Job, who drinketh up scorning like water?

"Which goeth in company with workers of iniquity, and walketh with wicked men.

"For he hath said, It profiteth a man nothing that he should delight himself with God.

"Therefore hearken unto me, ye men of understanding: *far be it from God that he should do wickedness; and from the Almighty, that he should commit iniquity.*

"For the work of a man shall he render unto him, and cause every man to find according to his ways.

"Yea, surely *God will not do wickedly, neither will the Almighty pervert judgment.*"[5] Job XXXIV: 7-12.

The first chapter of the epistle to the Hebrews opens with an exposition of the manifestation of God to man through his Son, whose divinity is here asserted and his personality proclaimed superior to that of the angels; then follows:

"But unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a *sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom.*

"*Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity;* therefore, God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows." Hebrews I: 8, 9.

Chapter III of the First Epistle of Peter continues the theme of Chapter II, which is an exhortation to upright living in all social relations; then follows:

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[4] In agreement with *justice.*

[5] Justice.

"Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous:

"Not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing: but contrariwise blessing; knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing.

"For he that will love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile:

"Let him eschew evil, and do good; let him seek peace, and ensue it.

"For *the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous,* and his ears are open unto their prayers: but *the face of the Lord is against them that do evil.*" I Peter III: 8-12.

"Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not.

"Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.

And *every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.*" I John III: 1-3.[6]

"Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man:

"But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed.

"Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.

Do not err, my beloved brethren.

"*Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and*

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[6] Further elaborated in verses 4-10.

cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning." James I: 13-17.

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* * * "God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him." I John IV: 16.

Commentary

In the light of these passages it is clear that the New Testament standard of morals may properly be classified as a form of that type of ethical theory variously known as Perfection, Eudaemonism, or Ethics of Personality. This form of ethical theory, in its historical development, is explained somewhat in detail in Seth and MacKenzie, two of the references in Appendix B. Seth's Ethical Principles, Part III, goes beyond the usual range of books on ethics. Under the title, The Metaphysical Implications of Morality, the author discusses the problems of God, freedom, and immortality. On these topics he is also in general agreement with the New Testament and with the philosophies of Plato and Aristotle.

Recognizing the fact that Christianity is a religion, but one that includes a system of morals, it may be said that moral faith is included in religious faith. This is, and for centuries has been, the case with the majority of civilized men—Jews, Christians, and Mohammedans. God is conceived as the embodiment of all righteousness. The highest ideals that the religious man can conceive, and whatever notions he may have of moral perfection, he attributes to God. Thus faith in God includes faith in moral ideals and the possibility of moral progress. Love of God includes love of righteousness and an impelling obligation to seek to attain it. Furthermore this faith and this love, with their impelling motives, are strengthened by the belief that the ultimate triumph of right is guaranteed because it is allied with God, or emanates from Him. This religious background of the morals of the New Testament is variously conceived even among Christians, some of whom regard God as both all powerful and sole creator, and the good man as merely submissive to the will of God, while others look upon the warfare between good and evil as a real battle in which men have the opportunity to cooperate with God in securing the triumph of right. It is not our purpose here, however, to discuss theological questions; they are referred to only as they throw light upon the problems of ethics and the development of character.

Ethics, as well as religion, is characterized by faith in a moral order, whether this be one that is inherent in the universe and made progressively manifest to man as he develops, as is commonly assumed of the laws of nature, or whether the moral law is inherent in human nature alone and is developed by the creative power of man and society, is a matter about which philosophers differ as theologians may differ concerning the relation of God to the moral law.

In opposition to the faith of adherents of both religion and ethics is the unbelief of the Skeptics. The Sophists, contemporaries of Socrates, and the later Skeptics, rivals of Stoics and Epicureans, were generally thorough-going skeptics in religion, morals, and natural science. In the field of morals, principles are